

## Robert Hays to Andrew Jackson, November 2, 1797, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO ROBERT HAYS.

Knoxville, November 2, 1797

*D'r Col.* This will be handed you by your old acquaintance and my old friend William Crawford<sup>1</sup> who, I met with this morning, at this place. He is going to that country to refit his weather beaten Constitution, and to fix upon a spot to situate himself on for life. he has entirely left of Drink and I am in hopes will profit by his imprudence. Anything that you can do for him I am convinced your goodness of heart, will excite you to do, I mean in giving him information, of the Country. Should he stand in need of any small supplies will thank you to furnish him and I will be accountable to you therfor.

<sup>1</sup> Probably one of Jackson's South Carolina relatives. He appears later in the Jackson letters, and seems finally to have settled near Huntsville, Ala.

Upon the subject of the Mercantile business I am sorry we had not more conversation, But sir send on your Grant. by Mr Wiggins and I will Try to do the needfull, fix your price and I will try to get more, If possible, however I will not sell for less than you name.

I intend upon mature deliberation If you send on the Grant, to lay in about six thousand Dollars stock, perhaps more—but this will be regulated by your advice. If we dip into the business It will be necessary [to] lay in a sufficient stock, so that the profits may be an object.<sup>2</sup> But you may rest satisfied that I will not run in Debt.

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2 To sell Tennessee lands in Philadelphia was a common practice of the day. They passed into the hands of speculators, who later sold them to settlers. Dealing in frontier lands was the foundation of many of the great fortunes of the colonial and early national period of our history.

I reached this place last evening where I found Mr Claibourn, with whom I expect to go on. My horse is verry sick perhap I may send him back and ride one of Mr Loves<sup>3</sup> as far as Winchester. This I would do could I be certain of funds, to purchase another at Winchester on my return. If we go into the Mercantile business It will be necessary to forward me some small sum to discharge the freitage to pitsburgh.

3 John Love, of Winchester, Va., whom Jackson met on his journey. From him, or from Charles J. Love, of Nashville, he learned of the frauds in the issue of the warrants to settle the military lands reserved in Tennessee by the state of North Carolina. He communicated this information to Alexander Martin, in Philadelphia, a member of Congress from North Carolina, who sent it to Governor Samuel Ashe, of that state, on Dec. 7, 1797, in the following letter:

“ *Sir*, Andrew Jackson, Esqr. a senator from the State of Tennessee in conversation respecting the affairs of that State, a few days ago told me he was doubtful there were great Frauds about to [be] practised on the military Lands reserved in that State by the State of North Carolina for her late continental Line; that forged Certificate from drunken Officers had been obtained for officers and supposed Soldiers in order to procure military Warrants to a considerable Amount, and that this Business was in the Habit of daily going on with Impunity—similar to the Rascality and Villany late practised with regard to the Warrenton Certificates. I requested Colo. Jackson to reduce to writing what he knew respecting these nefarious Transactions that I might transmit his Account of the same to your Excellency. he was so obliging as to comply with my Request, and your hath his statement of the above enclosed—he has his Information from a Mr. John Love, of Virginia who was present at one of the aforesaid Transactions, and will be ready to swear

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to the Truth of his Assertions whenever required. He is expected in a few Days in this City and then I propose to take him before one of the federal Judges and have him sworn to the truth of the above and transmit his Affidavit. In the mean while your Excellency may cause the military Returns in the Secretarys Office to be examined and perhaps the returning person or Surveyor on Examination may discover the above Fraud, or the Returns themselves may carry on their Face marks of the same, by which your Excellency may be able to suspend all such Returns as may appear suspicious; at all Events permit me to suggest the propriety of your Excellency suspending all such Warrant and Grants that may appear as above till Mr. Love's Deposition can be forwarded. Your Excellency will please to pardon the Liberty I have taken in the above Hints your Wisdom and Prudence will do that which will be right and proper to detect and prevent such shameful Abuses about to be made on the public Lands. I have the Honour to be with great Respect

“Your Excellency's most humble servant”

This incident became known as the Glasgow Land Frauds, from the name of James Glasgow, secretary of state in North Carolina, who was considered guilty of a share in the conspiracy. Governor Ashe referred the matter to the assembly, and a committee investigated and uncovered a vast amount of fraud. It recommended the arrest of eleven men and declared that William Tyrrell, Redman D. Barry, and Stockley Donelson were the leaders of the conspiracy, with Glasgow strongly suspected of complicity. Glasgow resigned his office. Stockley Donelson, who was Jackson's brother-in-law, was charged, about 1801, by Will White, secretary of state, with having a warrant for 100 acres which by courses and distances made 100,000 acres and which was registered for 100,000 acres in Tennessee. An indorsement on Governor Ashe's message to the assembly shows that Jackson's statement, transmitted by Martin, was missing when the papers came back from the senate.

I must now beg of you to try to amuse Mrs. Jackson and prevent her from fretting. the situation in which I left her—( *Bathed in Tears* ) fills me with woe. Indeed Sir, It has given

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me more pain than any event in my life, but I trust She will not remain long in her dolefull mood, but will again be cheerfull. Could I learn, that, that was the case I could be satisfied.

your attention to her, and to my old friend Mr Crawford, will create a Debt of Gratitude that shall never be forgotten by me. I will expect to hear from you by the first post and every post. My respects to Mrs. Hays and believe me to be with Esteem

your friend sincerely